Bookreview: Sheldon Krimsky, Science in the Private Interest: Has the Lure of Profits Corrupted Biomedical Research? (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 264 pp. ISBN 0742543714, $19.95 (paperback)

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first example, a local community organization, using professional techniques, carried out interviews with neighborhood residents. Results were used to inform government professionals about new types of questions they should be asking of their data, and indicated the need for further toxic analysis. In the second example, local knowledge was used to enhance traditional epidemiological surveys and increase collective self-help, community organization and capacity building (p. 139). In the third example street science was used to support legal claims to convince the Supreme Court of the City Council's negligence.

The final example illustrates the power of mapping to provide simple visual representations of complex problems. The community hazard map, produced by younger community members, brought together different ethnic groups because it visualized the complex issues that face the entire neighborhood.

Corburn identifies four practical ways in which local knowledge can contribute to health research and policymaking, in the form of: epistemology, procedural democracy, effectiveness and distributive justice. As a researcher interested in social-capital relationships of environmental and health inequalities, I think he could add social capital to this list, as it is a useful by-product of street science.

No absolute definition of social capital is available in the literature, but common definitions presented by Putnam (2000) and Bourdieu (1984) are used widely. In 1998 Woolcock stated that social capital was a resource of agents needing to coordinate for mutual benefit. More recently Berkman and Kawahci (2000) suggest that two common features spanning all definitions of social capital are that it is an ecological construct, and that it incorporates a sense of public good. It appears to me that bottom-up research and decision-making by local communities enhances community cohesion, reduces social exclusion and raises both the bridging and the bonding social capital of neighborhoods and communities. It struck me that the participants in the case studies here are harnessing individual skills and human capital to enable each other to work for a common collective goal, and thus are increasing the social capital of the neighborhood.

This book is easy to read, enjoyable and informative, and it provides practical solutions that work effectively in given situations. The narrative is fluid, and has a well-defined, coherent structure. The four case studies are engaging, and are well framed by supporting chapters outlining not only the need and importance of local knowledge but also its juxtaposition with professional science. This book is refreshingly accessible and is an excellent supportive text for researchers, students, community members and local government professionals who are embarking on, or are currently engaged in, local knowledge gathering or community participation projects.

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Sheldon Krimsky, *Science in the Private Interest: Has the Lure of Profits Corrupted Biomedical Research?* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 264 pp. ISBN 0742543714, $19.95 (paperback).

Sheldon Krimsky's book discusses the growing influence of the private sector on public science. This is a development which most scientists are aware of, but that nonetheless has generated little discussion outside of the scientific community and been largely ignored by the social sciences. He argues that through increasing cooperation between private companies and academic researchers we are witnessing "significant changes in the culture, norms, and values of academic science" (p. 1), and thus, the loss of what he calls the "public-interest science." In order to illustrate his thesis he focuses on biomedical research in the USA, an arena where conflicts of interest can have immediate effects on human health, life or death. It is a field in which Krimsky is ideally placed to make a contribution. He is Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at the School of Arts and Sciences and an adjunct Professor at the Department of Public Health and Family Medicine at Tufts University. His research has centered on the connections between science, ethics and values, and public policy.

Krimsky argues that the trend toward the commercialization of science is driven by the idea that academic knowledge needs to be made economically valuable and transferred into marketable products. This, the author suggest, was triggered by a decrease in public funding in the last quarter of the twentieth century and thus the need for academic science to find new financial sources to sustain its research. Additionally, Congress created incentives in the 1980s to support the process. The main argument for this active encouragement of private engagement in science was the "triple-win" situation (p. 2), where universities gained new resources, the private sector received access to lucrative contracts, and the public would benefit from the many products that would be developed subsequently. Krimsky points out that, in contrast, the downsides of privatization are much less obvious and difficult to track as any negative consequences will evolve over a much longer period. He argues that with the growing influence of for-profit organizations on research, academic freedom will be cut, ethical standards will be eroded, and scientists will lose their status of independence. This development would turn universities into hybrid institutions where public and private interests remain in constant conflict. For example, the author asks how the public can trust assurances that a certain drug is safe when the academic scientist conducting the study has a financial interest in the product, or is a shareholder of the issuing company.

Krimsky approaches the topic of increasing private influence in biomedical research from a variety of perspectives. He illustrates how scientists come to collaborate with private companies, and gives an overview of the historical development of this trend. Revisiting Merton, the book maps the changes in academic science brought about by the involvement of the for-profit sector upon norms such as universalism, communalism, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism. Krimsky also looks at the role of researchers on federal advisory committees and the conflicts of interest that arise as a consequence, in turn following how these disputes are played out in academic publications and court rooms where scientists are heard as expert witnesses. He concludes that "academic entrepreneurs behave differently than public intellectuals": academics with a private interest "market products," while public-interest scientists "promote ideas" (p. 223). Krimsky points out that it is the latter rather than the former who support the process of constant betterment of society (though he does not spell out what the "betterment" of society means for him). So he calls for a clear division between academic and corporate science in order to avoid conflicts of interest. However, he comments rather bitterly that the "science professoriate, once a calling for scholar-teachers, has become a staging ground for self-interested entrepreneurs who want the dignity and prestige of the position and the freedom to advance their pursuit of personal wealth" (p. 224).

In order to support and illustrate his points, Krimsky assembles numerous case studies. In these he tells the story of how academic scientists work under such conflicts of interests, and how private companies influence research conducted in universities. Often it is the private players themselves, and not the scientists, who decide what, or even if, results are published, where they are disseminated and at what point in time.

The number of cases that Krimsky collects in this book is impressive; however, at times the collection lacks a clear structure that leads the reader through the different parts of the book. Even though the author sets out the theme of each chapter in the introduction to the book and concludes each one with the opening questions of the next, readers quickly may find themselves lost in the sheer numbers of anecdotal cases. Stories seem to be interchangeable and often it is unclear why a

particular argument is raised in one context and not another. Similarly, other cases show up at several different points in the book, sometimes repeating themselves, without being clearly located within the issue at hand.

Krimsky paints a vivid picture of the contrast between today's science and academic research in the good old days. However, some readers may find his arguments too black and white. He talks about universities being "more than the well-springs of wisdom. They are the arenas through which men and women of commitment can speak truth to power on behalf of the betterment of society" (p. 3). For the more relativist social scientist this can sound a bit too enlightened: has science ever been as untainted and purely interested in the common good as Krimsky depicts it? Are the scientific results produced by researchers actually universally applicable? Is the relationship between academic researchers and policymakers described appropriately as "truth speaking to power"? These are legitimate questions that the author seems unprepared to fully engage with.

Similarly, Krimsky's application of Merton's norms serves as a useful mechanism to illustrate the changes in scientific ethos triggered by the increasing power of private interests in sciences. Still, a critical discussion of these principles would have served the book well, not least because, as Krimsky himself points out, US academia has been involved with the private sector to various extents for decades, and thus left the path of pure public-interest science and Mertonian norms long ago.

Despite this criticism, Sheldon Krimsky's book represents an important contribution to a relevant and much-needed debate on the changing nature of the academic sciences. Where are they going? Where does society want them to be heading? And how can it be ensured that they follow the path that society thinks is best? This book makes a good start in answering a few of these questions. The influence of the private sector on the sciences seems to have progressed to an alarming degree in the USA—a development that could gain momentum elsewhere too. This book is an important voice in favor of academic freedom and independence and should be noticed by scientists, policymakers, and the public alike.

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